

MAR 13 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION OF TARO BY IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSALS SET FORTH IN ACT 211, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2008, AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OUTLINED IN THE TARO SECURITY AND PURITY TASK FORCE'S 2010 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE.

1 WHEREAS, from the sacred union of Papa and Wākea came
2 Hāloanakalaukapalili, the kalo, the progenitor and elder brother
3 to Hawaiians, and Hāloa, the first man, who together represent
4 the ties binding heaven and earth; and

5
6 WHEREAS, kalo was the initial source of substantial
7 nutrition for the early Hawaiians without which the early people
8 of Hawaii could not have thrived and possibly not have survived
9 as a population in Ka Pae 'Āina; and

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11 WHEREAS, the kinship story of Hāloa and
12 Hāloanakalaukapalili binds the descendants of Hāloa in a
13 reciprocal relationship of kuleana of malama 'āina; and

14
15 WHEREAS, no other Hawaiian staple crop, including 'uala,
16 mai'a or 'ulu, is considered as sacred as kalo to the people of
17 Hawaii; and

18
19 WHEREAS, kalo supported and elevated everyday inter-
20 personal relationships among the early people and their
21 spiritual connections to the islands; and

22
23 WHEREAS, kalo is further esteemed as a primary food source
24 that continues to provide substantial nutritional value; and

25
26 WHEREAS, protection of the individual as well as Hawaiian
27 culture, history, and spirituality are reflected in the
28 protection of kalo and the areas in which kalo is grown; and

29
30 WHEREAS, the reciprocal relationship between kalo farms and
31 the communities across the Hawaiian islands continues to improve
32 social and familial bonds, intellectual achievements, cultural



1 connections, and emotional and physical health of island-based
2 residents; and
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4 WHEREAS, by the arrival of the first Europeans in 1778,
5 Hawaiians had developed one of the most advanced systems of wet
6 and dry kalo cultivation in the Pacific, feeding a population of
7 more than three hundred thousand; and
8

9 WHEREAS, the number of acres under wetland kalo production
10 islandwide has fallen dramatically from some thirty thousand
11 acres in 1850 to approximately five hundred acres today; and
12

13 WHEREAS, kalo became the state plant in 2008 in honor of
14 the cultural, historic, and agricultural significance of kalo to
15 Hawai'i and its people; and
16

17 WHEREAS, the Taro Security and Purity Task Force was
18 created by Act 211, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, to guide policy
19 and research kalo and kalo farming as well as to support the
20 vitality, economic viability, and perpetuation of kalo and kalo
21 farming in Hawaii; and
22

23 WHEREAS, the Governor's 2010 comprehensive plan "A New Day
24 in Hawaii" called for an "agricultural renaissance" to improve
25 food security, boost local jobs and revenue, and decrease
26 dependence on importation; and
27

28 WHEREAS, Hawaii imports approximately two million pounds of
29 kalo annually from China, Mexico, and other Pacific islands; and
30

31 WHEREAS, Hawaii is subject to frequent and chronic
32 shortages of kalo, lu'au leaf, and poi, particularly following
33 natural disasters, due to insufficient commercial supply and
34 insufficient kalo production; and
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36 WHEREAS, the importation of kalo presents a high risk of
37 invasive pest introduction and diseases capable of threatening
38 kalo cultivation and reduces opportunities for numerous young
39 kalo growers to drive local kalo production and naturally reduce
40 state dependency on kalo importation; and
41



1 WHEREAS, in 2013, the Department of Agriculture identified
2 the lack of locally grown, staple starch crops as the most
3 pressing concern for Hawaii's food security; and
4

5 WHEREAS, kalo, as one of the highest yielding starch crops
6 per acre in Hawaii, is a key factor in addressing this need for
7 local staple starch production, along with other Hawaiian food
8 crops; and
9

10 WHEREAS, even the lowest sea level rise estimates indicate
11 the likelihood of inundation of unsuitable, brackish water in
12 lowland areas that produce the bulk of locally grown kalo,
13 including Hanalei, Kauai; Keanae-Wailuanui, Maui; Hālawā,
14 Molokai; and Waipio, Hawai'i Island; and
15

16 WHEREAS, the production and consumption of kalo and poi
17 significantly factor into a healthy Hawaiian diet and overall
18 healthy lifestyle of the state population; and
19

20 WHEREAS, community-wide practices involving healthy diets
21 and lifestyles lead to the reduction of diabetes and heart
22 disease within the State, which in turn leads to reduced demands
23 on the state healthcare system; and
24

25 WHEREAS, despite the many benefits of kalo and its
26 significance in Hawaii, the amount of kalo produced and kalo-
27 growing lands available in each ahupua'a continue to limit
28 capacity for change due to existing shortages; and
29

30 WHEREAS, perpetuating and expanding kalo production in
31 Hawaii contribute to resilient communities and an overall policy
32 of "pono economics"; and
33

34 WHEREAS, the "pono economics" policy seeks to:
35

- 36 (1) Implement economic initiatives reflecting and
37 reinforcing traditional Hawaiian values;
38
39 (2) Repair ecological balance to achieve social balance;
40 and
41



1 (3) Protect the rights and interests of future
2 generations; and
3

4 WHEREAS, the voices of a younger generation that desire to
5 grow kalo are increasing every year, and it is the kuleana of
6 this body to protect the foundation of, and lay the groundwork
7 for, their success; and
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9 WHEREAS, the Taro Security and Purity Task Force's 2010 and
10 2014 reports to the Legislature outlined eighty-seven strategic
11 recommendations organized in seven broad categories, noted key
12 policy issues, and identified partner organizations and state
13 agencies capable of implementing the recommended initiatives;
14 and
15

16 WHEREAS, the Taro Security and Purity Task Force has helped
17 strengthen relationships among kalo farmers, researchers, and
18 state agencies, especially around issues of water and land,
19 educational outreach, pest control, and the preservation of
20 Hawaiian cultivars; and
21

22 WHEREAS, the Taro Security and Purity Task Force has
23 supported, through policy and education, the growth of
24 subsistence and small-scale kalo farmers as an under-represented
25 but valuable segment of the agricultural industry; and
26

27 WHEREAS, the Taro Security and Purity Task Force dissolves
28 on June 30, 2015; and
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30 WHEREAS, an online petition recently initiated by the
31 public has collected more than one thousand seven hundred
32 signatures supporting the continuance of a transparent entity
33 that would facilitate and implement the Taro Security and Purity
34 Task Force's recommendations, further highlighting the urgency
35 and value of perpetuating kalo for the greater community; and
36

37 WHEREAS, the one thousand seven hundred signatories
38 supporting the continuance of a transparent entity to follow the
39 Taro Security and Purity Task Force highlights the urgency of
40 increased protective measures and the value of perpetuating kalo
41 cultivation and consumption for the greater community; now,
42 therefore,



1
2 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
3 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2015,
4 that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is requested to develop a
5 strategic plan for the protection of taro by implementing the
6 proposals set forth in Act 211, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, and
7 recommendations outlined in the Taro Security and Purity Task
8 Force's 2010 report to the Legislature; and
9

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the strategic plan be aimed at
11 creating a permanent state body that will continue to represent
12 taro farmer concerns at the Legislature and with agencies,
13 facilitate the work outlined in Act 211 and the 2010 report to
14 the Legislature, and provide a point of contact for researchers
15 and agencies interested in working with taro farmers; and
16

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs
18 is requested to report its strategic plan to the Legislature no
19 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular
20 Session of 2017; and
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, President of the
24 Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chairperson of
25 the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and
26 Taro Security and Purity Task Force.
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OFFERED BY:

[Handwritten signatures]
~~DC~~ *DC. [unclear]*
Bil [unclear]
Hayes [unclear]
James M. [unclear]
James [unclear]

